prospective, is the backbone of their prosperity. The switching engine No. 239 has done all the railroad work between West Terre Haute and Terre Haute during the last two years, ata

ard, Wiley McCloskey and W. S. Zimmerman, brakeman.

No. 239 hauls the workers' train from the city, each morning but Sunday, at 6:15 and distributes hundreds of min-

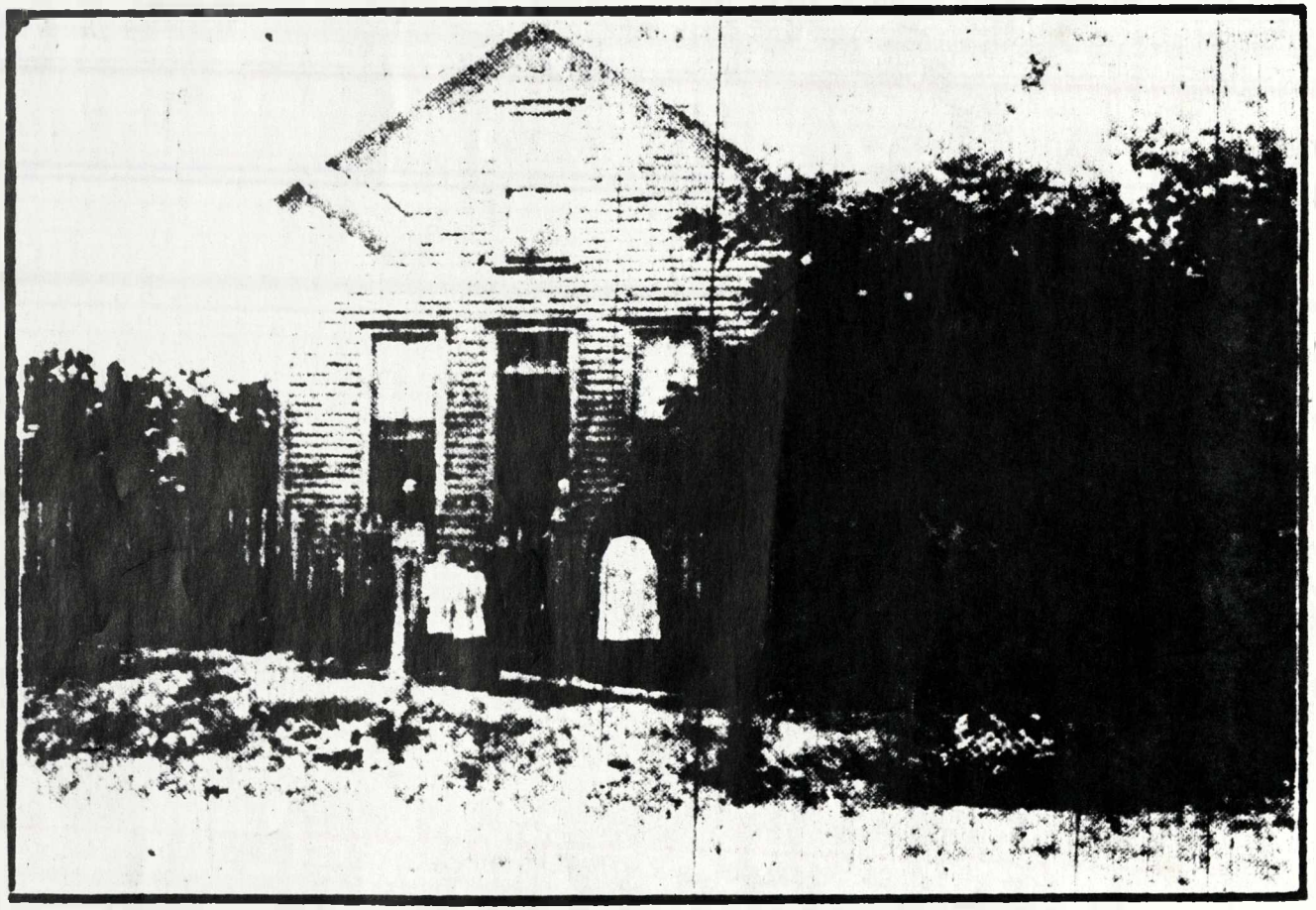
over several mines; near at hand are gravel pits of the Big Four and the Vandalia, 26,000 yards of gravel coming out of the latter in less than a month. In those hills are coal, shale and clay

and these would be reached by the switch. It is reported that a new ganization is under way to estab the largest plant in the field for manufacture of vitrified brick, pres and building brick and all kinds of

New coal mines will be opened, manufacturing plants must incre their output, since one of them cently had to decline a large order wh it could not fill and the prospects certain that West Terre Haute and Vandalia over-the-river system are go to be busier than ever next year. Am the bright prospects should be a ha some little depot.

W. T. H.

Another Old Landmark of West Terre Haute.



OLDEST HOUSE IN WEST TERRE HAUTE, SAID TO BE SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS OLD AND BUILT ON THE SITE OF THE FIRST TAVERN AT THIS PLACE.

OVER

DOROTHY MORTON CAN'T P

NEW YORK, Oct. 21.—Dorothy Mor operatic singer, who testified that real name is Elizabeth Macarty, was amined yesterday in supplementary ceedings to determine her ability to a judgment of $[illegible] held against her Patrick H. Roche, proprietor of the R more hotel.

Miss Morton, dressed in clothes of latest model, said she was a singer present unemployed, but admitted last week she sang in a Harlem m hall at the rate of $300 a week. Prio that she had a four weeks engagem at the New York Roof Garden for w she was to be paid $400. "But I did get the money," said the singer ruef "because I was in debt and other pe got it."

Miss Morton said that at the pre time her husband did not contribute her support, and added that several of-town managers owed her money.

APPLAUD CAINE'S PLAY.

LONDON, Oct. 21.—Although P endary Webb-Peploe, a leading Lon clergyman, indignantly refused the vitation to the special clerical mat of Hall Caine's "Prodigal Son," on ground that it was an impiously titled play and the invitation a bra attempt to chloroform the church's scientious view of the evils of the st more than 1,500 of his brethren w present and loudly acclaimed the formance.

esting Picture of the New Wabash River Bridge Taken During the Dedication Exercises--This Picture Gives One an Idea of the Great Capacity of the New Structure.

The Tribune Gazette
Terre Haute, Ind. Sun. Oct. 22, 1905, p. 3

West Terre Haute

Page 1

West Terre Haute Has Long, Colorful History

Community Affairs File

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

By DICK SUTLIFF

Tribune Staff Writer

McQuilkinsville, Mac'sville, Macksville, Maxville, West Terre Haute—

The name of the "town across the river" from Terre Haute isn't the only thing about West Terre Haute that has undergone dramatic changes since the birth of the community in the early years of the 19th Century.

West Terre Haute, now the hub of activity in Sugar Creek Township, once held promise of surpassing Terre Haute in its business and industrial development, but somehow, fate saw to it that such was not the case.

However, West Terre Haute residents are quick to point out features that many towns of its size, and some larger communities, would be pleased to count among their blessings.

The crime rate in West Terre Haute is relatively low. There are two fire departments in the community. A new post office and branch bank grace the downtown area. And the streets are comparatively free of automobile accidents.

Pushing for Levee

The West Vigo Levee Association is still pushing for a new dike to protect the town from the ravages of Sugar Creek during periods of excessive rainrainfall. An extension of the community's storm sewer system also is in the works.

There's talk of a new elementary school to be built within the next few years, replacing the present North, South and Central elementary schools. The town has one community playground in operation, and another being developed.

John A. Scott, the energetic president of the town board of West Terre Haute, credits the community's three service clubs — Rotary, Jaycees and Optimists — with spreadheading projects for improving the town.

There are about 70 businesses in West Terre Haute. About a dozen churches are located either in or near the town. Scott says residents like to live in West Terre Haute because it has the charm of a small town, and yet all the advantages of living in a city.

Enrollment at the three public elementary schools for this school year is 640 students. The North School has 323 pupils, Central 174 and South 143. St. Leonard's Roman Catholic elementary school has 40 pupils.

Other elementary schools in the West Terre Haute area include Consolidated with an enrollment of 362 pupils, and the Dresser School with 83 pupils. Concannon Junior High School has 422 pupils, while West Vigo High School boasts an enrollment of 896 pupils.

New Structures

Two of the newest structures in West Terre Haute are the one that houses the U. S. Post Office, and the one occupied by the West Terre Haute branch of the Terre Haute First National Bank.

The post office was opened last March 23 at 29 S. 3rd St. It was built at a cost of $50,000 and is operated on a lease-rental basis. The single-story brick and masonry building is modern throughout, including gas air-conditioning and heating.

John H. Cusick, acting postmaster, says the new faciities are a far cry from the old post office at 617 National Ave. The West Terre Haute post office (Zip Code 47885) handles 45,000 pieces of outgoing mail daily, and processes about twice that number of incoming items.

There are 1,050 city patrons, Cusick reports, and 1,100 rural customers. Two city routes are maintained, along with four rural routes. The post office employs 16 persons, including Cusick.

Bank Opened

The branch bank was opened Nov. 28, 1966. The new brick structure is of Italian architecture, and is located at 301 National Ave., just north of the post office. The branch's former location was at 123 Paris Ave.

The first bank in the community was the State Bank of West Terre Haute, chartered in 1904. It merged with Terre Haute First National in 1960, and offices were maintained in the old location until the new full-service drive-in bank opened for business.

James E. Black is the branch manager, while Miss Gerald L. Branham is an assistant vice president assigned to the branch. Ronald Reagan (not related to the California governor) is in charge of the installment loan department

There are 14 employes at the branch, which boasts seven inside teller windows and two drive-in windows.

Levee Imperative

With the town progressing as it is, the necessity for getting the levee constructed becomes even more apparent. Gil Bedino, who operates funeral chapels in West Terre Haute and Terre Haute, is president of the levee association.

He remains optimistic that the federal government will eventually release funds already approved for construction of the levee. The town was granted $832,000 for work this year, but last June local officials were informed by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers that the money was no longer available. The corps said the grant had been revoked about five years ago.

However, Bedino and other flood control sponsors were never informed of any such revocation. U. S. Sen. Birch E. Bayh (D-Ind.) and U. S. Rep John T. Myers (R-Ind.) are working to determine what the actual status of the project is.

Bedino says Bayh told him recently that he sees no reason why the House and Senate Appropriations committees did not permit the Corps of Engineers to transfer the funds from another account to the levee project.

"We're still hopeful and we're still praying that we're going to get it (the money)," Bedino says. He adds that cutbacks in the federal budget in connection with the 10 per cent surtax may be responsible for holding up the funds.

The Corps of Engineers has said that the money was not actually forthcoming at the time of the appropriation because of a right-of-way dispute with the Penn Central Railroad. The rhubarb was not settled until this spring, thus clearing the way for construction to begin.

Cost of Levee

The estimated cost of the levee construction is pegged at $819,000. Of that amount, $705,000 would be from federal funds, and $114,000 in local money. The project was authorized in a federal Flood Control Act of 1938.

The levee group has been working on the project since the disastrous flood of 1958. The dike would protect about 440 acres from the backwaters of Sugar Creek when the Wabash River goes on its periodic rampages of flooding.

Floods have weakened the old Sugar Creek levee, which afforded only limited protection when it was first built. It's felt that the new levee would soon pay for itself in the saving of homes and businesses from damaging floodwaters.

The flood of 1913 wrought havoc on West Terre Haute. Many homes were toppled and one death resulted, historical records indicate. The effects of the ravaging winds and rain did not wear off for a long period of time.

The community's service clubs, of which Scott has unlimited praise, are active in a variety of civic activities designed to upgrade West Terre Haute and bring favorable publicity to the town.

Rotary Club Active

The principal project of the Rotary Club is its Clothe-A-Child drive each Christmas. Through the efforts of the organization's 26 members, many children of less fortunate families receive outfits of clothing at Santa Claus time.

The Jaycees, with 46 members, counted 30 projects last year. The club was formed 3½ years ago, and since then has been responsible for many civic projects, not the least of which was leading the drive to fill in the old "Y" dump at the east edge of West Terre Haute.

The Optimist Club, formed 2½ years ago, also sponsors a Clothe-A-Child campaign, and its members work hard to fulfill the club motto, "Friend of the Boy." The club was one of the organizers of a new town park being developed. There are 41 members in the club.

All three clubs co-operate to the fullest extent with the town board, says Scott. "We would not be able to get a great many things accomplished if it were not for the devotion to community service of Rotary, Jaycees and Optimists," he says.

Branch Library

Another feature of West Terre Haute is a branch of the Vigo County Public Library. It offers residents a variety of materials, and is one of the primary assets of the community. (In fact, much of the historical material for this article was obtained at the library in West Terre Haute.)

The administration of West Terre Haute comes under the jurisdiction of the town board. Other members, in addition to Scott, are Charles Cardinal and Dallas Day. The clerk-treasurer of West Terre Haute is James Mann.

WEST TERRE HAUTE BRANCH BANK—One of the newest buildings in West Terre Haute is the full-service drive-in branch of the Terre Haute First National Bank. The bank and the post office in the rear handle most of the mail and financial matters of Sugar Creek Township residents. Photo by Martin.

WEST TERRE HAUTE POST OFFICE—About 135,000 pieces of mail are handled daily at the new West Terre Post Office. The building was dedicated last spring. It was constructed at a cost of $50,000, and is operated on a lease-rental basis. John H. Cusick is the postmaster. Photo by Martin.

The town's waterworks, a municipal operation, includes a 225,000-gallon storage tank adjacent to the building which houses the community's police and fire departments and the West Terre Haute Volunteer Fire Department. Chester Krischak is superintendent of the waterworks. Atty. C. Joseph Anderson is the town counsel.

The town fire department, headed by Chief Paul F. Murphy, has four firemen, plus the 13 waterworks employes, who are on call. The department has two pumper trucks for fighting blazes anywhere in the corporate limits of the town.

The volunteers, under Chief John Belskamper, were organized in 1951. Belskamper tries to keep 24 men on the volunteer roster at all times. Its two pumper trucks answer calls in Sugar Creek Township from which the department derives most of its financial backing. A siren and 16 receivers in volunteers' homes notify firemen when calls come in.

Hay Heads Police

The community's police department is headed by Chief Timothy Hay. He has three patrolmen who work in shifts, providing 24-hour per day protection for West Terre Haute residents.

Population changes in West Terre Haute reflect the economic history of the community.

The 1960 decennial federal census lists 3,006 residents. The first census, in 1900, showed the population was 651. Historical records show there were only 250 residents in West Terre Haute in 1880.

But by 1910, the population had increased to 3,083, nearly five times the number of residents 10 years earlier. The all-time population high for the community was 4,310 in the 1920 census.

Coal mining was responsible for the boom in West Terre Haute in the early part of this century. Other valuable resources were clay, shale and gravel, and at one time, vegetable gardening was the leading industry.

Considerable light is shed on the early years of West Terre Haute in the "First Directory of West Terre Haute, Indiana," published in 1906. (It's available to patrons of the West Terre Haute branch library.)

The directory indicates there were 11 coal mines in the area in 1906 with a total average daily output of 2,000 tons. Daily wages were about $1,750. Four clay product plants employed 200 men with total weekly wages amounting to about $3,000. The plants produced common building brick, paving brick, drain tile, sewer pipe and related materials.

WEST TERRE HAUTE BUSINESS DISTRICT—This is a view of National Ave. (U. S. Highway 40), looking east from the 700 block in West Terre Haute. U. S. Highway 150, which winds its way to Paris, Ill., and points northwest, also serves the community. Photo by Martin.

The Terre Haute Brick and Pipe Co. built the first factory in West Terre Haute, in 1894. It was known as the Vitrified Brick Co. Later, the Vigo Clay Co., National Drain Tile Co. and the Miller Brick Co. constructed plants.

Business houses sprang up in large numbers about the turn of the century. With the construction of the Wabash River bridge, West Terre Haute took on a new life. The bridge was completed in 1905 at a cost of $271,000.

Of the life and times of West Terre Haute in those days, the directory says: "It became a rendezvous for much of Terre Haute's undersirable population, and self-protection became necessary. A town marshall was chosen. Quiet and respectability were restored."

It continues: "Terre Haute capitalists and West Terre Haute business men saw golden opportunities in the coal and clay fields about the place, and industries sprang up on all sides.

"Coal shafts sank to the rich veins beneath. Red hot kilns began to light the midnight skies in the vicinity of the shale pits.

"Huge steam shovels gathered the valuable gravel from the old river bed, and puffing locomotives crept to the very edge of town, and pulled away with ballast to be spread over miles and miles of railway."

900 Buildings

The 1906 directory reported there were 900 buildings in town. It said 750 persons were employed at the time, with the average total monthly pay totaling $25,000.

Among the town's assets then were four doctors, four lawyers, six fraternal orders, two schools, two weekly newspapers, a bank, four churches, a railroad, four factories, two telephone systems and numerous other retail establishments.

The demise of the coal mines resulted in a sharp reduction in the population of West Terre Haute. In 1930, the number of residents had dropped to 3,568, but climbed slightly to 3,729, according to the 1940 census. In 1950, the population was 3,357.

The directory's historical

Continued On Page 45, Col. 1.

W. Terre Haute Has Colorful History

Continued From Page 44.

account notes that much of the information was obtained from W. W. Harvey's article in the Vigo Democrat, one of the local newspapers.

Land Deed In 1817

The land register at Vincennes contains an entry, dated April 8, 1817, showing the recording of a deed from the federal government to Philomer T. Dean for 160 acres of land on which West Terre Haute was to be settled.

By the early 1830's Samuel McQuilkin had come into possession of Dean's tract of land, and constructed a crude log building on National Avenue between 3rd and 4th streets. He operated a general store there, serving the needs of the budding town.

McQuilkin subsequently laid out the town around his store, and the village was named McQuilkinsville. Inevitably, folks shortened it to Mac'sville. Later the apostrophe was removed and a "k" added, making it Macksville, and finally the name was corrupted to Maxville.

Originally, all of Vigo County west of the Wabash was in Wabash Township, but the township was divided May 5, 1820, when the present boundary lines were established. The West Terre Haute Town Plat was recorded Nov. 23, 1836.

The development of the coal-laden bluff west of town began about 1890. Many leading citizens foresaw the boom in the near future, and thought it advisable to incorporate the town.

The matter was put to a public test, and two factions sprang up—one called the Citizens and favoring incorporation, the other called the Peoples party and opposed to it.

Town Incorporated

The 1906 directory tells it like this:

"A vote was taken Aug. 14, 1894. The vote was 60 to 40 in favor of 'The Citizens.' So the town was incorporated, and the name changed to West Terre Haute." Four years later, the post office was also changed to West Terre Haute.

WEST TERRE HAUTE TOWN HALL—Chief of Police Timothy Hay checks out the radio in his squad car, while Paul F. Murphy (on fire truck at right), town fire chief, and William Kulinski, a member of the volunteer fire department, show off two of their trucks used on fire runs in West Terre Haute and Sugar Creek Township. Photo by Martin.

Later that year, a town election was conducted. The Citizens' candidates, beat the Peoples' candidates, and the latter party ceased to exist. The newly-elected trustees met for the first time on Sept. 6, 1894.

Chester R. Church was the first town board president. The most important business conducted at the meeting was the appointment of a three-member school board, headed by F. Miller as president.

In 1872, Richard McIlroy (for whom McIlroy Avenue was named) built the first brick building in West Terre Haute, and operated a general store there until 1904. It was operated by his son Harry McIlroy until his death.

In 1875, the first post office was established, with McIlroy as postmaster, a position he held for about 20 years. An early post office was located at 225 Paris Ave., which was West Terre Haute's main street before the completion of the National Road (U. S. Highway 40).

A public ferry, later called Cox's Ferry, opened in 1831 to carry folks between Terre Haute and West Terre Haute. Later, the Terre Haute street car system extended to West Terre Haute, and the community was also on the Paris interurban line, both of which ceased to exist prior to World War II. A wagon bridge preceded Wabash Avenue bridge to connect Terre Haute with its sister town.

Sugar Creek Township, named for Sugar Creek which got its name from the abundance of sugar maple trees along its banks, was a prime source of maple sugar as late as 1874.

Now, nearly 100 years later, the face of West Terre Haute has changed immeasurably, but the spirit of the pioneers lives on. One night reasonably presume that the day may come when West Terre Haute regains its industrial capacity, and joins Terre Haute in boosting the economic value of the Wabash Valley.

WEST TERRE HAUTE, IND.

Community Affairs File

May 20-1911

West Terre Haute.

Census figures showing an extraordinary large percentage of increase in population has centered attention on our neighboring town across the Wabash River, West Terre Haute. Lots in the town are at a premium and the community is most prosperous. The present members of the town board are: Jacob Krackenberger, president; W. W. Brown, treasurer, and Richard J. Owens, clerk. The other members are R. P. Niece, Wiatt Cummings, Charles Rushworth and Daniel Smith. Everyone is a booster. Fred Lindsey is town marshall and John Schmidt is his assistant. The census figures gave West Terre Haute an increase in population of over 100 per cent, the best record made in Indiana.

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

Community Affairs File

West Terre Haute

Historically Speaking

Community Affairs File

West Terre Haute

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

Ts APR 17 1977

In 1920 there was a movement afoot to annex the little town of West Terre Haute to the City of Terre Haute. There was much interest in the possible annexation, both pro and con, but the proposal never came to pass. However, the idea does crop up now and then as recently as the early 1970's.

The history of the community of West Terre Haute begins with the recording of a deed in the Land Register of Vincennes on April 18, 1817, when the United States gave to Philomer T. Dean a specified tract of 260 acres situated on the high knoll directly across the river from Terre Haute. The original town of Macksville was destined to stand on this land.

During the administration of President James Monroe, the National Road was pushed through from the East to the Mississippi River. Hearing the cry of "Westward Ho!" the pioneers tackled the dense forests with their axes and soon little clearings dotted the vast wilderness.

Those early settlers living west of the Wabash River needed a place to buy supplies, items they were unable to raise on their small farms. Crossing the Wabash by ferry or ford was extremely hazardous in times of high water, and the journey to Terre Haute was a long one. A trading post west of the river was badly needed.

Samuel McQuilkin came into possession of Mr. Dean's tract of land and was the first person to take advantage of the situation. In 1833 he erected a rude but strong frame building which still stands between what is now Third and Fourth streets and has long since been converted into a dwelling.

New immigrants arrived, and the valuable and fertile bottomland located east and south of the store was cultivated. As the lowlands were unsuitable for dwellings, Mr. McQuilkin solved the problem by laying off a town around his store building.

McQuilkinsville was platted and recorded Nov. 22, 1832, by Curtis Gilbert, Vigo County Recorder, and described as Section 19, Township 12, Range 9.

The name was shortened to Mac'sville, and later the apostrophe was omitted and the letter "k" inserted in its place. So the town was called Macksville or Maxville.

McQuilkin's store was typical of the general or country store of that time. It sold everything the settler needed from smoked meats to whisky.

Not only did the local residents support the store, but the construction gangs slowly pushing the National Road westward also traded there. Many of the workers took up permanent residence in Macksville. This not only increased trade at the store but also caused the building of a tavern by Smith Hinch at what is now the northwest corner of Third and National Avenue.

Mrs. Samuel McQuilkin, a lady of many talents, opened the first school in Sugar Creek township in the rear of her husband's store. The school was maintained by popular subscription. Township elections were also held in this building in the 1850s.

Robert McIlroy opened a store a short time later. In 1862, Prof. Elias Shumer taught a subscription school in the historic structure tht has served so many purposes over the years.

In 1872, Richard McIlroy built the first brick building on Paris Avenue, and three years later, the first post office was installed in this building with McIlroy as postmaster, a position he held for over 20 years. The name of the post office was changed to West Terre Haute in 1898.

Many of the original homes were log cabins which were either replaced by frame or brick homes or were enclosed and remodelled.

In the early 1850s, Josiah Adgerton built the first blacksmith shop on Lot 70 on National Avenue and made the first steel plough shovel used on the National Road.

In 1867 John Griggs erected the first flour mill which burned in 1872.

Just north of Paris Avenue, where later a lumber company was located, Mr. Jones built the first steam saw mill. Near the site of the former school stood an old-fashioned brick yard.

The first Sunday School in Macksville was organized in 1870 in a small frame school building erected by Erastus Church at the close of the Civil War. The school was located just north of the railroad. Rev. Benson Rippetoe conducted the first religious service in the building.

Ellen Broadhurst, Henry McNeary and John Van Cleave taught the "Three R's" in the day school.

In 1875, while Sunday School was in session, the building was struck by lightning. Supt. John Peacock, more than a little ruffled, and other officials soon repaired the damage and the building remained in use until the Vandalia Railroad acquired the land north of the tracks. The building was then moved to the site of the later high school and continued to served as a school house for many years.

Old-timers of West Terre Haute recalled a major disaster in the community when the driver of a moving van crowded with Terre Haute residents returning from a religious service in West Terre Haute drove off the grade into the flood waters below.

The romantic story of Miss Sophronia G., a maiden lady who lived in a log tavern which stood on what became the vacant lot next to Hodger's residence on Miller Avenue is part of the little town's history. Miss Sophronia eventually married a Mr. Sanford, an elderly gentleman, and they lived happily together several years. Both died in 1850 and are buried in the south end of Lot 55 on Miller Avenue.

In 1880 the town had a population of 250, two stores, a blacksmith and wheelright shop, saw mill, shingle machine and cigar factory.

In 1895 the population had increased to 500, 10 years later to 3,500 in 1905, and by 1920 the town boasted 4,380 inhabitants. Census figures of 1970 show there were 3,006 persons residing in West Terre Haute.

Vigo County Public Library

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